

Remnant Life Church
October 5, 2025
The Character of Integrity
Matthew 8:5-10

I would like to begin this morning by asking 2 questions that will provide us with 2 definitions

- The first question is - What is character?
 - There are in fact multiple definitions and usages of that word
 - More than once in my life I have been called a character
 - A character is also a part or role in a play or movie
 - In the context for this morning, however, we define character as how you think, feel, or behave in various situations and circumstances
 - Character is often used to identify who and what you are
 - *True greatness is not measured by the headlines a person commands or the wealth he or she accumulates. The inner character of a person – the undergirding moral and spiritual values and commitments – is the true measure of lasting greatness. – Billy Graham*
- The second question is - What is integrity?
 - It can mean to be honest or fair
 - He is a man or she is a woman of integrity
 - But it is also used to describe the wholeness or completeness of something
 - The integrity of the building would be compromised in an earthquake
 - It has been said that “Integrity means that if your private life was suddenly exposed, you would have no reason to be ashamed or embarrassed. Integrity means your outward life is consistent with your inner convictions.” (Billy Graham)
 - Another way to say this is a person of integrity can be trusted by everyone at all times
 - It is who you are and what you do when you are all alone
- The character and integrity of a person are the foundational building blocks of who you are
 - Every relationship, every action, every word, every situation that requires a decision are all impacted by your character and integrity
 - Even your relationship to God and your walk with Him
- This morning, I would for us to look at a man in the Bible who had great character and integrity
 - But he is not someone you would immediately think of
 - He is not a prophet, a disciple, a priest, or a king
 - He is not even a confirmed follower of Jesus
 - He’s not even a Jew
 - He is a Roman soldier

READ – **Matthew 8:5-10** (also found in **Luke 7**)

- The Roman centurion was a man of power
 - A professional soldier in the Roman army
 - He commanded a group called a centuria
 - That word translates literally to “one hundred men” although the number was actually 80
 - But it is also the word from which his title centurion is derived
 - A senior centurion commanded a cohort which was 6 centuria or 480 men
 - The centurion was almost always an intelligent or learned man who had proven himself to be capable and trustworthy to lead while also, without hesitation, following the orders of his superiors
 - He would have also, in all likelihood, been a man of character and integrity
 - What then were the qualities of this man that can lead us to this conclusion?
 - Qualities that you can use in you life today
 - Qualities that caused Jesus to respond in way that was very unique
 - Because only twice does the Bible ever say that Jesus was ever amazed
 - Once when he went to his hometown of Nazareth and he was amazed at their lack of faith (**Mark 6:6**)
 - But the second time was at the great faith of this centurion
- What do we know of this man’s character and integrity that lead to Jesus being amazed at his faith?

1. **V 6 – He had compassion for his servant**

- a. The Bible does not say who the servant was, but the centurion was certainly not required to care for him
- b. This compassion, however, is what the centurion combined with his faith in Jesus that created an atmosphere for a miracle occur
- c. Paul in **Eph 4:32** instructs the church (the church then and the church today) to be kind and compassionate to one another
- d. Compassion replaces our desires with a desire to help care for and meet the needs of someone else
 - i. What do I mean by that?
 - ii. This man had spent his entire adult life being trained to command and think of nothing else but expanding the glory of Rome
 - iii. His compassion replaced that with a loving care for someone who would otherwise had no way to save himself
- e. Can we see that compassion as an example of the same love and compassion that God has for us when He sent Jesus to save us?

2. **V 5 – He asked for help**

- a. Asking for help, especially God’s help, is an important first step that demonstrates humility
- b. Fact is, the centurion certainly had no reason or need to ask

- i. He could have commanded Jesus to come with him; he could have taken Jesus to his home by force
 - ii. He could have offered to pay Jesus
- c. Instead, he humbled himself and asked for help
 - i. This was the first aspect of this man's character that I believe amazed Jesus
 - ii. His humility and faith was greater than his pride or his position
- d. **Prov 18:12** - *Before a downfall the heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.*
 - i. Contemporary English Version - *Pride leads to destruction; humility leads to honor*
 - ii. This man was honored for his humility

3. **V 6 – He was honest regarding his helplessness**

- a. Many people create beautiful or altered pictures of their lives that are, in fact, not reality
 - i. They do it to save face with others
 - ii. In order to perpetuate the lie of their own lives
 - iii. Perhaps even to better cope with a difficult or embarrassing situation
- b. The centurion, because of his humility, was willing to present a less than perfect picture
 - i. If we cannot be honest with God, or with ourselves, we will never understand the importance of being honest with the people in our lives – including our brothers and sisters in the Lord
- c. **John 1:1-5** - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*
 - i. The only way we can be that light is if we are honest about who we are and our need for Jesus in our lives every day

He showed compassion to his servant

He asked for help

He was honest about his helplessness

4. **Vv 8-9 – He not only knew what Jesus was but who He was**

- a. The centurion would have been very familiar with Jesus
- b. He likely would have been monitoring all of the religious activities and leaders in the area to help maintain control
 - i. Jesus was not the first prophet to attempt to unite the people
 - ii. The Maccabean revolt had occurred not that long in their past

1. A rebellion that had to be put down for Rome to maintain control
2. Judas Maccabee, the leader of the revolution, was killed
- iii. Now these people were getting restless and Jesus seemed to be at the center of it all
- iv. The people still believed that Jesus had come to free them from the oppression of the Romans
- v. Just as Moses did for the people in leading them to freedom from the Egyptians
- c. But that is not why Jesus came to His people
 - i. It was not to free them from the shackles of the Romans
 - ii. It was to free them from the shackles of sin
 - iii. And the soldiers of Rome in that area were on high alert
- d. What makes this account even more unique is that the Romans certainly did not think, act, or believe as the Jews did
- e. As a matter of fact, the Jews and early Christians would endure great hardships through the 2nd and 3rd centuries
- f. It would not be until the early fourth century under Constantine that Christianity would finally be recognized and come out from under the oppression of Rome
- g. The centurion knew what the situation was but it was who he was dealing with that enabled him to speak in faith with full humility knowing that all Jesus had to do was say the word and it would be done
- h. And Jesus was amazed!

I began this morning with the questions what is character and what is integrity?

- And so, I will also end with questions – important questions that each of us need to answer
 - First, do you speak and act and live like you know without a shadow of a doubt who Jesus Christ is?
 - Second, are you willing to present yourself in humility to others for the sake of showing them Jesus in you?
 - Third, what impact can God have through you in someone else's life because you are a man or a woman of character and integrity?
 - And finally, do you know that what you do in your life, living in the character of integrity, can have long-lasting effects that you cannot begin to fathom?